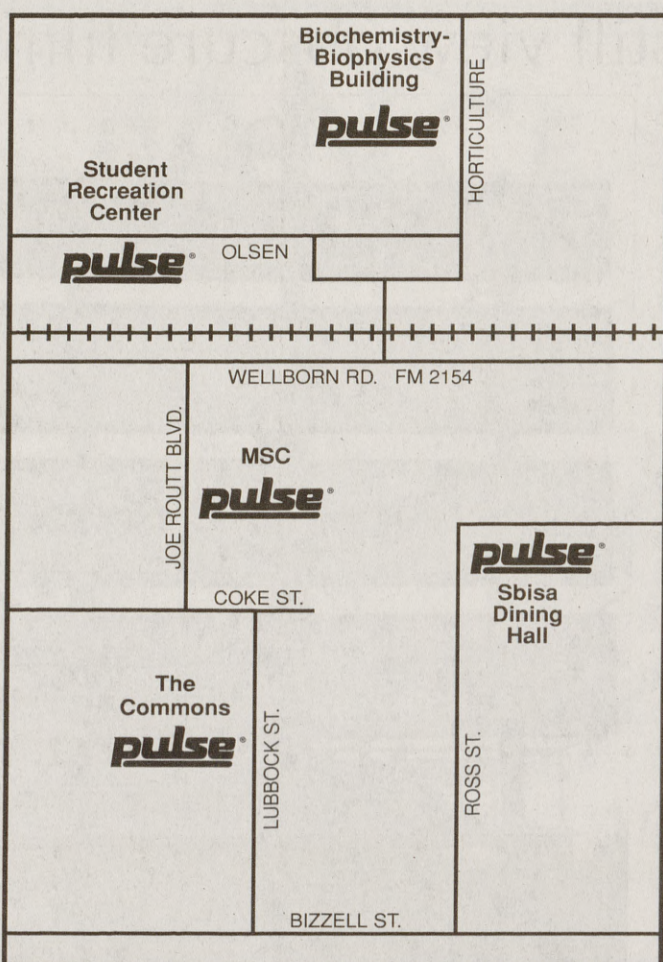


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Soma strives for mainstream appeal

By Amy Collier
THE BATTALION

Four A&M students are doing what they love most while they're in college — playing music across Texas.

The students came together in the fall of 1993 to form Soma, a heavy metal band.

Chris Kline, drummer for Soma and a junior industrial engineering major, said the members are influenced by old Metallica music, Smashing Pumpkins and White Zombie, creating a sound he describes as a "hard-core, psychedelic groove."

After the band formed, it immediately wrote 15 songs and recorded 11 of them on *Nibble With the Happy People*, which was released in January. The tape is being sold at record stores in College Station, and 150 of the 200 band distributed have been sold.

Despite the success the band

has had selling its music, Kline said the members have encountered some problems performing in College Station.

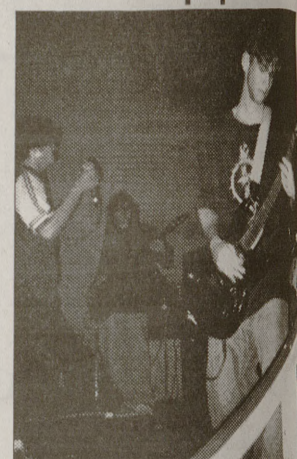
"I don't know if it's just people in this town," Kline said, "but for some reason, I get the vibes that people don't like us."

Kline said he gets these negative vibes because the fliers the band puts up to advertise its shows are often torn down. He said the reason for this may be that the band's audiences sometimes get rowdy, and fights occasionally break out during its shows.

But Kline said the members can't control its audience.

"We just have real good intentions," Kline said. "We don't have any bad intentions. We just want people to support the local music scene."

The band is trying to overcome these difficulties and establish itself in the music industry. Kline said the members' im-



Soma

mediate goal is to get signed onto a record label.

"We just want to have someone who could back us," Kline said. "There's a lot of things we need right now — like better equipment."

Spears brings high energy honky tonk to Shadow Canyon

By Rachel Barry
THE BATTALION

A self-described honky-tonk original Texas musician will perform at Shadow Canyon Saturday night, marking the first live performance at the dance hall.

Ronny Spears of Honky Tonk Hardcore said he wants to give College Station a taste of Texas music. Spears said his music is upbeat and sincere and that his shows are high-energy.

"You won't cry at any of our shows," he said.

Spears said that in Fort Worth, where the band is based, it has to keep its performances on a positive level to keep its audiences entertained.

"You've got to be on a positive scale, or they'll walk to another place where it is rocking and kicking," he said.

Spears said his music stems from his roots and is influenced by musicians Jerry Jeff Walker and Robert Earl Keen.

"I've never been real comfortable with people from Harvard telling me how my music should

be played," he said. "I stick with my roots and go with it."

The band has had surprising success overseas. Spears said the success is because Texas music is rare outside of the United States. He also said that when there is a song that is heartfelt, it goes over well overseas.

"When they hear something that is straight out of J.R.'s living room, they get fired up," he said.

Spears said the six-piece band tries to keep people dancing. He said that he gets the same rush from performing that he experienced when he was involved in sports in high school, only this is more fun.

"When I'm singing, it's just like I go to another place, and when I finish, I come back to see how I did," he said.

Spears said the only fear he has when performing is forgetting words to the songs. He said, however, that he has been able to ad-lib and keep the songs going when he has a memory lapse.

"It's not that I'm an actor," he said, "it's just that I am afraid of failing."

John Muzyka, one of Spears' agents, is bringing Spears here as part of an effort to bring more music to the area. Muzyka graduated from A&M in May 1993.

While he was a student, Muzyka put together a showcase for local amateur musicians. He said that after moving to Fort Worth and being exposed to Texas music and the people who play it, he wants College Station to experience it.

Muzyka said Spears' music has a lot of genuine roots.

"The music embodies what it means to be a Texan," he said. "People here have so much pride in their state."

He said the musicians will be able to relate to Aggies because they share Texas pride.

Muzyka began his job as an agent for some of the musicians in Fort Worth as a hobby and as a favor to his friends. He said bringing Texas music into College Station can be a risk, but that it is a risk he is willing to take.

"I love the music, and if you don't risk anything, you don't gain anything," he said.

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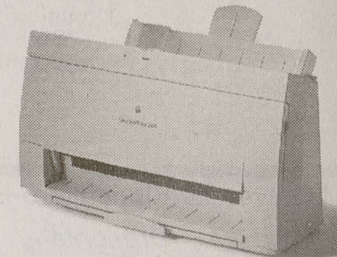
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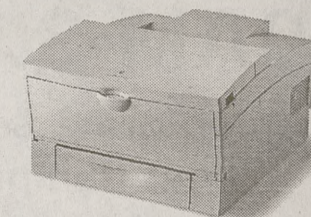
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